6. Vegetable oils have continued to remain exempted from the levy of excise duty altogether.

7. The interest on cash credit has recently been lowered by 10% point.

[3811 *Transferred to the 27 March, 1992*]

**Distribution of tea and Janata toilet soap through P.D.S.**

3812. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to distribute tea at a cheap rate and Janata toilet soap through Public Distribution System; and

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have also decided to entrust more items to the National Cooperative Consumers Federation of India (NCCF) such as pulses, note-books, matchboxes washing soap, etc., to feed the PDS,; and

(d) if so, by when the scheme will be put into operation; and if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (d) The Central Government is at present responsible for the procurement, storage and transportation of key essential commodities viz wheat, rice levy sugar, imported edible oils, kerosene and soft coke; the State Government and U.T. Administration have been advised to include additional items of mass consupmtion according to local preferences for distribution to the consumers using the PDS outlets. Central Government has reiterated the same in the context of implementation of Revamped Public Distribution System in about 1700 identified blocks. In these areas, the State Government/ U.T. Administration have been requested to include items like pulses (gram), tea, soaps and iodised salt for distribution using PDS outlets. They have been advised to indicate their requirements of additional commodities to the National level organisations, namely, National Agricultural Cooperative marketing Federation (NAFED), National Consumer Cooperative Federation (NCCF), Tea Board etc., to facilitate centralised procurement by these organisations to the extent possible. Some State Government have undertaken distribution which is an ongoing process.

**Making the Consumer Protection Act effective and purposeful**

3813. SHRI AJIT P.K. JOGI:
KUMARI ALIA:
SHRI N.E. BALARAM:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted a high power Working Group to examine the suggestions for making the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 more effective and purposeful;

(b) if so, the date of constitution and the composition of the group;

(c) the terms of reference of the group; and

(d) the time-bound programme to obtain, examine and implement the recommendations of the group by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c) Central Government constituted a high power Working Group on 7-1-1991 under the Chairmanship of Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, West Bengal. Other Members include State Food Minister from Tamil Nadu, Members of Parliament, representatives of Central Government Departments/Offices, trade and industry and voluntary consumer organisations.

The Working Group was to suggest suitable amendments to make the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and MRTP Act 1969 more effective. Initially the Working Group was to submit its report within 4 months which was further extended upto 6-1-1992.

(d) The Working Group has since submitted its report which will be discussed in the forthcoming meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council which will make suitable recommendations in the matter. Thereafter the views of Ministry of Law and other concerned Ministries/Departments will be taken. Thereafter approval of Cabinet has to be obtained before introducing the Bill in the Parliament.